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City Hall
1313 Market Street
Redding
Shasta
California

HABS No. CA-~~1252~~
1252

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

NAME: City Hall
LOCATION: 1313 Market Street
PRESENT OWNER: City of Redding
OCCUPANCY: Vacant

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SIGNIFICANCE

Gary Wirth, a California registered architect, has studied the building and classified it as a fine example of Modified Romanesque Revival. Vertical brick pilasters and horizontal brick corbelling bands are softened by semi-circular arched windows on all four elevations. The stepped brick corbelling at the cornice adds an interesting visual rhythm and defines the top of the exterior wall planes. The original corner cupola will be restored so that it can once again add the kind of visual relationship and importance the northwest corner of the structure had to its site. The cupola was surmounted by a little corona of fancy ironwork and a flag stand (refer to photograph exhibits).

This particular architectural style was characteristic of many buildings in Redding in the late 1800's. Presently, the building is the fourth oldest brick structure in the town and is the oldest building associated with City government since Redding's incorporation in 1887.

In the past, there have been some minor interior and exterior modifications to accommodate the growth of City offices; however, these alterations have not detracted from the building's original architectural charm, including its scale, materials, colors, textures, shades and shadows.

The vine-covered north wall is an important landscape feature. The vine, (*Parthenocissus Quinquefolia*), was planted in 1910 and has contributed to making the building a landmark. The fact that the vine changes with the seasons adds distinction and diversity to the red brick structure. It should be noted that there is a great deal of public sentiment in support of maintaining the vine on the building.

The palm trees in front of the building are regionally significant. In the early 1900's, southbound travelers would ceremoniously stop and photograph the palms because they provided a stark contrast against the native Northern California vegetation.

PART I - HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: 1907
2. Architect: M. W. Herran
3. Builder: William Stephens

It is interesting to note that clay for the brick structure had been dug from a pit located four miles south of the building site. The bricks were manufactured locally by the Redding Brick and Tile Company and were later determined to be of superior quality.

4. Original plans and construction. (See attached Original Plans and Historic Structures Report).

5. Alterations and Additions:

The following historic account of the building's physical description was provided by Superior Court Judge, Richard B. Eaton, a local Shasta County Historian:

In April of 1907, the City completed the two-story, 7,000-square-foot City Hall at a cost of \$10,000; the land was valued at \$5,000. The architect, M. W. Herron, designed the building to accommodate City offices, the police, and fire department, Council Chambers and one rest room. The architectural style of the building is a modified form of Romanesque Revival. (See attached original plans and photo exhibit).

In January of 1908, the Women's Improvement Club planted seven palm trees on the north and west sides of the building and then landscaped the remaining open space. Two of these trees survive today and have a height of 50 and 60 feet. The north wall of the building is almost completely overgrown with a vine (*parthenocissus quinquefolia*).

The western facade of the building facing Market Street had letters spelling "City Hall" attached to it in the 1930's. These were removed when City Hall functions moved to their present quarters in 1961. The only other change in the western facade was that the window in the northwest corner was enlarged to create a doorway for the public entrance to the utilities department. The doorway was later bricked in.

The northern facade was altered to allow public entry to the utilities department. This entry was also bricked in.

The eastern facade was altered by cutting a door near the south end in an area that was formerly the City Jail. The door still exists but is not used.

The southern facade was also altered by a door cut for the Police Department and is presently used for service access to police vehicles.

The City Council Chambers are in the same location on the second floor as they were when the building was built.

The Council Chambers still exhibits the original tongue-and-groove paneling on the north and south walls. The windows facing Market Street have been covered on the inside with a soundproof partition. The main doors of the City Council Chambers are not original. Since Redding had electric lighting in the 1890's, the Council Chambers originally was equipped with large hanging electrical light fixtures that somewhat resembled chandeliers. At one time, there was a large, revolving electric fan to provide ventilation at Council meetings. On

the south wall of the Council Chambers hangs an original oil painting of Benjamin Barhard Reading, who was Secretary of the State of California.

The downstairs restroom is in its' original location and has its' original doors. The upstairs women's restroom was added in later years.

The City Jail originally had two iron cells manufactured by a local blacksmith with double bunks in each. One cell remains with its iron door intact and is used as a temporary holding cell by the Police Department. The other cell serves as the Police Property Room. The pressed metal ceilings in the building are original.

There is no cornerstone in the building, probably due to the added expense.

The two remaining Palm trees, located on the west side of the building, share the distinction of being among the very few Palm trees in the downtown area.

The structural engineer's evaluation of the condition of the building is of a positive nature. The engineer's report may be summarized as follows:

The building's main structural components consist of exterior brick walls, wood frame roof and floors. It is 57 by 60 feet in plan, and 36 feet high to the top of the parapet. (Refer to the attached plans illustrating the current dimensions of the building and Historic Structures Report).

B. Historical Context

The Old City Hall building has been the cornerstone of Redding City government since 1907. Even after the City Hall office facilities moved to a new location in 1961, the building still served as the Council Chambers and Police Department until 1977. Both of these functions will be moved to a new location this year, thereby allowing the building to be used for other uses yet undetermined. It should be noted that in 1907, Redding had a population of 3,000, and all the City's governmental offices were accommodated by the 7,000-square-foot building. Today, Redding's population is 43,560, and City Hall departmental offices occupy more than one City block.

Many of the issues debated in the Old Council Chambers have resulted in heated exchanges. One enraged Councilman, in the 20's, informed a heckler in the audience that, "He's better come armed to the next meeting! If you don't, somebody is going out of here on a slab." (1)

The political debates that City fathers were faced with are mindful of today's issues, but with a slight historic twist. One such debate involved the adoption of an ordinance regulating the speed of horses galloping down California Street. (2)

Police Department activities within the building have added to the building's prominence as a landmark. In the 1950's, a mob threatened to lynch two murder suspects held in the County Jail for killing two Sheriff's deputies. Late at night, the prisoners were moved and hidden in the holding tank of the old City Jail. (3)

For one City resident, the City Jail had been a home. Walter Belbow was arrested 260 times for being drunk in public. The first arrest occurred in 1950. Belbow claimed that he got drunk so he could get arrested and be with his friends. Belbow earned part of his room and board by cooking for the other prisoners. (4)

- (1) Redding Record Searchlight, 1961
- (2) Ibid
- (3) Redding Police Department
- (4) Ibid

The old building represents many things to the people of Shasta County. Aside from functioning as a police department, jail and Council Chambers, the structure has also served as a wedding chapel, civil defense headquarters, court room and office for the following:

1. City Manager
2. Mayor
3. City Attorney
4. Planning Department
5. Building Department
6. Fire Department

None of the events associated with these governmental functions could be classified as nationally significant; but when viewed from a regional perspective, they provide a clearer understanding of the historical events and problems of West Coast cities. The fact that these events can be tied to a single small building is an important historic asset to Redding and Shasta County. This is especially true when you consider that the mere presence of the building serves as a kind of historic window from which local residents can gauge the City's growth and reflect on its history.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

(See attached "Historic Structures" report.)

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings (See Historic Structures Report)
- B. Photographs of "Early Views" (See attached photographs)
- C. Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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2. Peterson, Edward; Redding-The First Hundred Years, "The 1880's -
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3. Peterson, Edward; In the Shadow of the Mountains, "Redding-The Hud City": Published by Edward Peterson, 1965
 4. Tillotson, W. D.; Covered Wagon, "Redding Then & Now":
Published by Shasta Historical Society, 1976
 5. Eaton, Richard B., Judge; local historian, 1520 West Street
Redding, California 96001
 6. Sheppard, Winifred M.; local historian, 1116 Pine Street
Redding, California 96001
 7. Henriques, Edwin A.; local historian, 2131 Canal Drive
Redding, California 96001
 8. Shasta Historical Society, Redding Museum and Art Center,
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 9. Pictorial Study of Historic Buildings in Redding; (National
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- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated (None)
- E. Supplemental Material (None)

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